

New £1.9m Research Funding to Transform Outcomes for Women in the Criminal Justice System

Monday 11 May, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls has awarded £1,987,632 to the University of Birmingham's Women, Crime and Justice Research Group to advance pioneering research into what works for women in the criminal justice system.

The three-year grant will fund the continuation of the Effective Women's Centres Project and new early intervention research, including the development of a family wellbeing assessment tool to help identify needs earlier and prevent crises. It follows £2.3 million of previous funding since 2015.

The programme builds on groundbreaking work validating the Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA) in the UK context for the first time. Earlier research by the project team has enabled this tool to be validated in the UK for the first time and introduced into more centres – to date, more than 2,000 women in England and Wales have been assessed using WRNA.

Professor Simon Pemberton, an expert in social policy and criminology, is leading the research. He said: 'We are already starting to see positive impacts from our partnership with women's centres. In particular, use of the WRNA has enabled women's centres to better address needs and offer enhanced support. 'The new funding from The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls will allow us to build the evidence base further. This is particularly important as the Government is making reforms aimed at reducing women's imprisonment and increasing the number of women supported in the community.'

Dr Barbara Scott (BSc Biological Sciences, 1977; PhD Medicine, 1981), Patron and Trustee at The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls, added: 'This important research will mean the needs and strengths of justice-involved women are better recognised, evidenced and met. Working together, women's centres, services users and academics are transforming the system into one that offers genuine opportunity for women to rebuild their lives.'

In a separate £3 million programme, The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls has partnered with the University, Henry Smith Foundation, and The Nelson Trust to support more women's centres to use the WRNA tool. This work will increase the ability of more women's centres to identify and address needs, as well as building an even more robust base for the research team to gather evidence.

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The JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls

E. Harpal.Bobby@jabbswomenandgirls.org.uk

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